ABOUT CANDIDATES.

YOU CANNOT TELL WHAT NOMINATING CONVENTIONS WILL DO

Dark Horses Have Often Won the Presidential Prize—Men of Great Wealth Feared—This Is a Nominating Year, and Here Are Pertinent Facts.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, Jan. 7.—It may be as well said of presidential conventions as it has been said of juries that no one can predict accurately what they will do. With the exception of the great soldiers who have been nominated and whose selection was indicated unerringly before the conventions which nominated them met, and with the exception also of two cases where the renomination of a president has been inevitable, it may be said that ever since the national caucus system was adopted, some sixty years ago, the action of the conventions of all the parties has been in the nature of a surprise. It is the unexpected which appears to be most likely to happen with national conventions. Nobody, for instance, expected that James K. Polk would be nominated in 1844. He was almost unknown. Martin Van Buren was regarded as the certain candidate, and he did have in fact a majority in the convention, but curiously enough, a rule which he had himself devised to secure his nomination in 1836, which provided that a two-thirds vote must be secured before any candidate should be declared nominated, prevented his receiving the honor in 1844.

In 1848 it was thought for a time that General Scott or possibly Daniel Webster would be chosen by the party they represented, but a single remark by Zachary Taylor, uttered in the heat of battle in Mexico, as well as certain machinations of the politicians, brought him of a sudden to the front and he captured the prize, leaving such great men of his party as Scott and Clay and Daniel Webster behind in the race for the honor.

Perhaps the most striking case of surprise occurred in 1852. The convention of the Democratic party seemed then unable to agree upon anybody. The strength of all the leading men in the Democratic party was tested. The little giant of the west, Stephen A. Douglas, then barely forty years of age, was unable to secure the vote of the convention, although he was immensely popular with his party, and in despair the managers turned to the little delegation from the state of New Hampshire and said to them, "Name your man and we will take him," and thus it happened that a person so obscure that most of his party had never heard of him, Franklin Pierce, became president of the United States.

In 1876 the result of the Republican convention was a surprise to the country. Blaine had run a noble race; Morton, Conkling and Bristow were splendid competitors, and yet the man who took the prize was so inconspicuous at the beginning of the balloting that his name attracted but little attention. The nomination of General Garfield in 1880 and that of Benjamin Harrison in 1888 were signal illustrations of the tendency of conventions to do those things which are surprising.

Thurlow Weed used to say that in the race for the presidency the dark horse has the best chance, and he always felt that William H. Seward would have received the nomination for president in 1860 had he been as obscure as Abraham Lincoln was.

National conventions have always been afraid of men of great wealth. Washington was the richest president, as he was the first. The two Adamses and Madison had a very small property. Jefferson was dependent upon his salary, left the White House in debt and was obliged to borrow money and sell some of his books to support himself in his old age. Martin Van Buren was worth about $60,000 when elected, and he accumulated property after he left the presidency. William Henry Harrison was so poor that he was dependent upon his trifling earnings as clerk of a little court in Ohio for his support while the presidential canvass was progressing.

Henry Clay might have earned a large fortune by practice at the bar, but he was an improvident man. He had continually to borrow money on notes, and he was in some pecuniary embarrassment, it is said, when he became the candidate in 1844. General Pierce had a small property. Buchanan an income of some $4,000 and General Scott was absolutely dependent upon his salary as a general in the United States army when he was nominated.

Lincoln was very poor. In the winter of 1860, some three months before he was nominated, he was in New York city, and he there met a friend whom he had known in Illinois.

Said Lincoln to this friend, "Well, now are you getting on in worldly goods since you left Illinois?"

"Oh, I suppose I'm worth $100,000," was his friend's reply.

"Well, that ought to be enough to keep you handsomely the rest of your life," said Lincoln. "I haven't done so well. I have $3,000 in money and my house in Springfield, which is worth about $6,000." Then he added with a merry twinkle in his eye: "Some of my friends say they are going to nominate me for vice president with Seward for president. Well, if they do and I'm elected, I ought to save $10,000, and that with what I've got will be enough for me, I reckon." Lincoln was then fifty-one years of age, and he seemed to look forward with content to the possession of about $20,000 as enough for him in his old age. His aggregate salary in the four years that he served was $100,000, and he was able to save about $40,000 of that and counted on saving as much more during his second term, so that he thought he would be worth about $100,000 when he left the presidency, a sum which he regarded as a very great fortune.

Grant had nothing but his salary when he was nominated, and only eight years before his nomination he had been living on $1,000 a year, and two years before that had been peddling cord wood in the streets of St. Louis. Mr. Hayes was comparatively well off when he was nominated, his fortune being estimated at about $100,000, and he was the wealthiest man, with two exceptions, nominated by either party in more than sixty years, and probably the wealthiest president elected since General Washington.

General Garfield was a poor man when nominated. He owned a house in Washington, but it was mortgaged, and he had some slight investments. After his death his property was so well handled that it was said to yield his widow something like $50,000. General Arthur and Grover Cleveland were each worth about $50,000 when they entered the White House. Each of them had made fortunate real estate investments, which in the course of a few years increased their wealth. Arthur's fortune at the time of his death was estimated to be $150,000, due almost entirely to appreciation of real estate which he owned in New York city. Cleveland is estimated now to be worth about $200,000, while his wife's fortune is considerably more than that sum. President Harrison had a very small property when he was nominated, and those who knew his circumstances at that time declared that all his possessions would not amount to $40,000.

Only twice, perhaps three times, in the past sixty years have men who were rich in the modern meaning of that word been nominated for the presidency. Mr. Tilden at the time of his nomination was called a millionaire, but the greater part of his wealth did not come to him until a year after the presidential election of 1876. Through certain investments in railway stocks, and especially by the enormous appreciation in the value of the stock of the elevated railway in New York, Mr. Tilden vastly increased his estate, and when he died his executors estimated his wealth at about $5,000,000. Another wealthy man nominated for the presidency was Horatio Seymour. He had large possessions in lands and stocks, but he was so charitable in the use of his property, so wise in the administration of it, that his wealth was not considered a detriment.

Moreover, the leading candidate for the nomination against him, George H. Pendleton, was also a wealthy man. He was not so rich as Governor Seymour, but he was one of the few prominent Democrats whose wealth made him conspicuous as well as his abilities. In 1848 the candidate of the Democratic party, Lewis Cass, was a man of wealth. He was, however, so conspicuous as a statesman and leader in his party that but little attention was paid to the fact that he had accumulated great possessions, mainly by the rise in value of property in Detroit, which he had years before bought for a very small sum.

Many of those who were candidates or were prominently mentioned in connection with the presidency and two or three who served as president died in poverty. Stephen A. Douglas after his brilliant career was practically penniless when he died, although had he lived a few years some land which he owned in the then suburbs of Chicago would have brought him a fair sum. James Monroe died in almost absolute poverty in New York city. John Tyler was a poor man after he left the presidency. Daniel Webster did not have much property, except his estate at Marshfield, and Henry Clay's place, called Ashland, was about all he left to his heirs. Jefferson's struggles with poverty furnish the saddest episode in his career, and John C. Breckinridge struggled hard in his practice at the bar to support his family.

A change in the disposition of conventions respecting the age of candidates has been noticed. Formerly the tendency was to select men who were well on in years. Jackson and Buchanan and William Henry Harrison were old men when they were elected to the presidency. The average age up to 1850 of candidates and presidents when elected was about sixty-two years. With the war era, however, the tendency to choose younger men began to be very marked.

Stephen A. Douglas was only forty-seven when he was nominated. Fremont was nominated when only forty-three, but he was the first candidate of a new party. John C. Breckinridge was barely forty years of age when he was nominated in 1860, and he had scarcely passed the constitutional limit when he was nominated and elected vice president in 1856. Gray hairs have not been the rule with candidates whether defeated or elected since 1860. McClellan, who was the youngest candidate ever nominated to the presidency and who was of most youthful appearance, was associated with another young man, George H. Pendleton, who was only forty-two years of age while McClellan was thirty-nine. Grant was only forty-six when he was first elected, Garfield was forty-eight and Cleveland forty-seven.

In the earlier days it would have been esteemed a rash thing to think of choosing a president who had not passed fifty years, although Henry Clay was only forty-six when he was first a candidate, and Alexander Hamilton might have been a candidate had he permitted it soon after he passed his thirty-fifth year, for although Hamilton was of foreign birth yet the constitution provided that persons who were of foreign birth at the time of the adoption of the constitution might be eligible for the presidency, and it has always been thought that this clause was put in for the possible benefit of Hamilton. Blaine was only forty-four when he made his exciting race for the presidential nomination the first time and but forty-eight when he and Grant tested strength for many days before the Chicago convention of 1880.

It will be seen, then, from these few illustrations that the tendency of conventions is to make an unexpected nomination and also that men of great wealth, or even of fair fortunes, are not likely to be put in nomination, and, moreover, that in this day of activity conventions are likely to look for men who have scarcely entered their prime.

F. J. EDWARDS.

OLD NAVAL HEROES.

ADMIRAL WORDEN, THE MAN WHO COMMANDED THE MONITOR.

Walter Wellman Tells How This Brave Man Is Passing His Declining Years. Admirals Selfridge and Jenkins—The Army and Navy Club.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7.—In the spacious parlors of the new Army and Navy clubhouse, which has just been opened in the aristocratic section of the city, a navy friend of mine called attention to a dozen old fellows who were playing whist near by, and asked if I knew who they were. I did not know, and he proceeded to enlighten me. "Old admirals on the retired list," said he; "old heroes, too, a good many of them. Do you see the old man who appears to be rather stiff in his joints—the one with the long white whiskers and a blackened forehead? That is Admiral Worden, the hero of the Monitor.

"Just at this time, when all the young men of the navy are eager for war with Chili, because of the opportunities they will get for winning distinction and promotion, the old admiral is an unusually interesting figure. There is a link between the past and the present. There is the man who commanded the world's first ironclad turreted vessel in its first engagement. That weak, shaky old gentleman was commander of Ericsson's Monitor when she steamed into Hampton Roads and attacked the terrible Merrimac, which had been destroying everything before her. You remember the story—how the Monitor excited the derision of the enemy, how they dubbed her the Yankee cheesebox, how the little craft bore the awful cannonading of her adversary without apparent injury, how the brave men on the Confederate ram suddenly awoke to a realization of the fact that at last they had a foe worthy their prowess, and how the Merrimac was finally compelled to run away to Norfolk; you doubtless remember, also, how the commander of the Monitor was injured by the concussion of a shot which struck the turret with terrific force near where he was peering through the sight hole, the flying particles of iron blinding his eyes and blackening his forehead; how he was found by Lieutenant Wise after the engagement lying on his back, temporarily blind, and how his first question was, 'Have I saved the Minnesota?' 'Yes, and whipped the Merrimac,' was the reply. 'Then I don't care what becomes of me,' said Worden. You remember how the fate of the republic appeared to hang in the balance during this engagement; how the intrepid captain of the Monitor was made a popular hero, and how the Yankee cheesebox instituted a revolution in naval construction and naval warfare."

"Yes," said I, "I remember it all. Who could forget this naval epic?"

"Well," continued my friend, "I want to tell you a little story about this man who sits before us quietly playing whist, with his face still bearing the marks of that memorable conflict—a story of a hero that is tender and pathetic. Worden served gallantly throughout the war, was made an admiral, and five years ago was retired on the highest pay of his grade, as if still on sea duty, by a special act of congress. He had been fifty-five years in the service, and was entitled to this distinction and reward if ever any man was. But what do you suppose this old hero is doing now? What is his aim in life? 'Ah, lieutenant,' said he to me the other day, 'go to Chili if you get a chance, and distinguish yourself in the service of your country if opportunity offers. As for me'—and here the veteran's eye kindled with thought of conflict, and he gave a sigh as if realizing that his fighting days were over—'I am simply a reminiscence. I am living simply to live. My only aim in life is to cultivate longevity. As long as I live my pay as a retired officer keeps my good wife from want, and we are able to do a little something for others. My health is not good, but I hope to live as long as my wife does for her sake. When she goes I hope to go with her. It is my desire to outlive her but a day. She is stronger than I am, but that I may if possible remain as long as she remains, you ought to see how I take care of myself. My sole occupation, I say, is the cultivation of longevity. I study hygiene, dietetics, every law or rule of health. For two years I have not been to a dinner. I do not go out nights. My entire time and energies are devoted to taking care of myself—not for myself, understand, but for the $4,500 a year which the government allows me during my lifetime. My good wife needs this as long as she lives, and that is what I am living for.'

"This was the old hero's story," continued the lieutenant, "and a sweet, pretty story it is too. Do you not think so?"

"Yes; but who are the other old men at the whist tables?"

"I do not know them all. The two partners at the first table are Admirals Selfridge and Jenkins. Selfridge is older than Gladstone, having entered the service in 1818. His first voyage as a middy was made in the old sloop-of-war Natchez, which captured half a dozen pirate schooners in the West Indies. He and his present whist partner were midshipmen chums together on the Natchez sixty-five years ago. That is going back a good ways in the history of the navy, isn't it? While a young man Admiral Jenkins commanded part of a boat squadron which cruised for pirates in the shallow waters off the coast of Cuba. He was known as 'Fighting Jenkins' in his day and was in the old frigate Congress at the capture of the Mexican Ayreau squadron in 1844. He participated in some hard knocks during the Mexican war and commanded a ship during the Farragut in the rebellion. These two men have seen between them 132 years of service in the navy—72 years for Selfridge and 60 years for Jenkins.

"Many other retired rear admirals are members of this club, and may be found here almost any day playing whist or talking over the old times. Worden is, perhaps, the most conspicuous figure of the late war remaining in Washington today. Over there in the corner is Admiral Hughes, a bluff and hearty old fellow, full of reminiscences and fun, who first sailed in the grand old Constitution, fifty-three years ago. He sailed all over the world in the Constitution, which was at that time the pride of the navy, and billet aboard her was as eagerly sought by officers as is assignment to the crack cruisers of the white squadron in these days. Admiral Hughes still retains an affection for the Constitution, and every summer he journeys to Portsmouth, N. H., where the old ship lies in the navy yard, that he may again walk the decks which he proudly trod a half century ago.

"There are, all told, on the retired list of the navy," continued the lieutenant, "about 500 men. Perhaps one-third of these live in Washington, and a majority of them drop in here nearly every day. It seems to be impossible for many of these old salts to tear themselves away from the capital, where there is gay society and congenial club life. Of thirty-seven rear admirals on the retired list fully thirty live in or near Washington. It is interesting to note how long some of these old sea dogs have been in the service. Selfridge, as I told you, started as a middy on New Year's day, 1818. Admiral Taylor and Admiral Lee entered the service in 1825, Admiral Smith in 1826 and Admiral Green in 1827.

"Another peculiar thing," concluded the lieutenant, "is that this old hero of the Monitor who sits before us has lived long enough to see the naval construction of the world swing back to the very type whose utility he so nobly demonstrated in Hampton Roads. The Monitor of his day was an experiment, but its success was so great that for a time the world was crazy after vessels built after that model. Subsequently naval constructors have tried everything else that ingenuity could devise, wasting untold millions of public money in their experiments. Today the best battle ships of the world are built in greater or less modification of the Yankee cheesebox. The low freeboard, the ramlike bow and the heavily armored turret are features of nearly all the great battle ships of modern construction. In our own new navy the Miantonomoh, the Monadnock, the Amphitrite and the other double turreted monitors are the very highest class of coast defense battle ships of which we can boast, and no nation can boast better. And here sits the man with the powder burned face who ushered in the prototype thirty years ago and who has lived to see naval construction revolutionized twice over—go from the extreme of wooden men-of-war to vast floating fortresses of iron and steel, and then swing back again to the immortal idea of Ericsson." WALTER WELLMAN.

LIVING A RETIRED LIFE.

Something About Hon. A. B. Cornell, Once Governor of New York.

[Special Correspondence.]

NEW YORK, Jan. 7.—No living man who has figured prominently in the politics of the state of New York is seen or heard of less these days than ex-Governor A. B. Cornell. Old friends that used to know him intimately and be conversant with his opinions and interests are forced to confess that they have no knowledge of either now. They had heard that he had gone to pieces financially and that he was doing nothing; they had heard, too, that his health was poor and that he was unfitted to meet the exertions of active business. Whether or not he lived in New York they would not tell.

But the truth is Mr. Cornell is not an invalid, nor is he without occupation. Now that he has withdrawn from public life and has no idea of ever entering it again under any circumstances, he cultivates the seclusion of private life. He has so often been the victim of misrepresentation by reporters that he does not care to see them, much less talk with them. He resolutely refuses to address political meetings or to take any conspicuous part in the public demonstrations of the party that honored him so conspicuously. Still he takes an interest in politics. During the recent campaign in New York he might be seen occasionally at the Republican headquarters in the Fifth Avenue hotel.

The glimpses of the man that were obtained on these occasions indicated clearly that he is in the best of health and that he has aged but little since he was governor of the Empire State. His hair has, however, blanched a little since then; he is perhaps a little stouter, but he keeps his face as smoothly shaven as ever; he has the same quiet and self reliant manner; he speaks with the same deliberation; he has the same inscrutable features that give no indication of his thoughts or feelings.

Mr. Cornell has not been a resident of New York city for some time, nor has he had an office here bearing his name. His home is in Yonkers with one of his sons, who is a lawyer on Broadway. It is in this office, too, that he transacts most of his business and receives those that have occasion to meet him in town. His hours are short—from 11 until 2. It is not easy to find him for another reason—the various interests that occupy his attention frequently call him away from town, and his absences are more or less prolonged according to circumstances.

As to the nature of these interests and where they are located Mr. Cornell himself refuses absolutely to speak. But it is understood that they comprise real estate, railroads and manufacturing. Although he is not believed to be as wealthy as he was once or possess the power in financial circles that he wielded a few years ago, he is not by any means a poor man. FRANKLIN SMITH.

The famous salt lake of Aalia Paakai, near Honolulu, occupies the crater of an immense tuia cone, whose ejecta covers several square miles, and are especially remarkable for containing numerous aggregations of crystalline grains of pure olivine.